

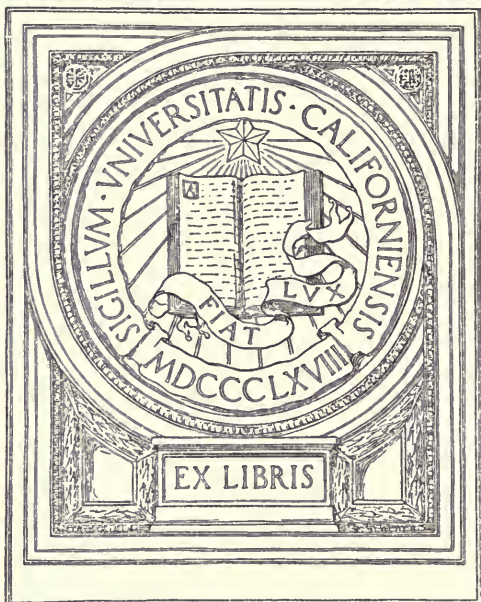
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For dear Mary.

C. d. B - ?
Livingston



REMARKS

MADE AT

THE FUNERAL

OF

MRS. LOUISE LIVINGSTON,

WIDOW OF EDWARD LIVINGSTON,

October 28th, 1860,

BY

REV. ALBERT S. HUNT.

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It will be easy for such as did not hear these remarks, to discover that a portion of them were made at Montgomery Place, before the remains of Mrs. Livingston were removed to the Methodist Episcopal Church in Rhinebeck, where the public ceremonies were conducted. As they are printed for intimate friends, and not published for the world, it has been thought best to retain the simple form in which they were first made. For the same reason, a few facts and reflections in reference to Mrs. Livingston's life and character, with which the world has nothing to do, will be found blended with the words which were spoken at her funeral.

A. S. H.



REMARKS.

DEATH has taken a friend from our fellowship. She has entered the paradise above, and it would be sinful for us to wish her back, even to this home of surpassing loveliness which she has left.

I stand not here to eulogize the dead; but as one whom she was pleased to honor with her friendship, I count myself happy in being permitted to speak a few words to those whom she loved, before we bear her from the dwelling where for years she has welcomed her friends, with a grace and a warmth of affection all her own. Those who have ever felt the warm pressure of her hands,—for she usually gave more than one,—can never forget it. She was most

happy when she could promote the highest happiness of those about her. Great efforts were never great to her, nor trifles small, if they could augment the pleasure of her friends. We shall ever remember the illustration her life has left us of a fact which the world is slow to receive, that true hospitality and genuine politeness can only spring from a loving heart. It is well, also, that here and now I should speak of her peculiar interest in the welfare of those who ministered unto her. We may say with truth she tenderly loved them all. There are those on every side of me whose tears testify how well they know this. They cannot but remember with what expressions of gracious pleasure, they were ever rewarded for their efforts to increase her comforts or her joys, and with what considerate kindness she was ever fearing to exact too much. Nor did her gratitude die in an hour, but again and again would she refer to some trifling act, wondering how one who deserved so little kindness should receive so much. Her disregard of every thing personal, and thoughtfulness of others, lived on to the last; and this, too, through years of dis-

ease so protracted, and pain so acute, that they might well have engendered selfishness.

When about to remove to her city residence in the autumn, the day of her parting with those neighbors whose kindness she had enjoyed during the summer was, to her, an eventful one. You have not forgotten,—you will never forget,—the last visit she paid you. Her feebleness was extreme, but her love for you triumphed over it. On that bright November afternoon, bearing flowers, and other parting tokens, she was placed in her carriage, and after passing from door to door to bid you her scarce audible farewell, and to receive the expression of your heartfelt good wishes, she returned home exclaiming, “This has indeed been pleasant.” But I must not speak longer here. If we trust in her Saviour we shall meet her again.

The last of a generation has passed away. The sons and daughters of Judge Livingston are now all in the world of spirits. She, whose departure we mourn to-day, entered the family

circle a stranger, was received as a sister beloved, and for more than half a century her rare natural endowments, her finished culture, her womanly dignity and grace, have been considered a family possession. Now that all are taken away, and we are engaged in funeral solemnities which must remind us of the virtues of the large family of which she was such an ornament, it may well be conceded that the memory of what they did, and of what they were, fills us with gladness in the midst of our sorrow. There were bright examples of patriotism and of piety in that circle, which belong as a legacy, not only to their immediate descendants, but to the whole country and the entire Church.

Mrs. Livingston's mental endowments placed her above the generality of her sex, and qualified her to become the counsellor, as well as the companion, of one of the ablest men our country has produced. He found strength and wisdom in her words. Others of the family circle, as well as himself, would often appeal to her superior judgment, and seek a refuge in her ever-ready sympathy; and they never left her

without a response which proved the depth of her affection for them. They were all dear to her, but it has been truly said that the one in sorrow or distress ever seemed nearest to her heart. Her suavity and cordiality you have admired, but you have more than admired her faculty of placing at once into a position of ease, the most inferior capacity which came in contact with her highly gifted mind. She never sought to shine at the expense of others, and, without apparent condescension, she adapted herself to the society she might be in, leaving all the better pleased with themselves for their intercourse with her. But I am not attempting a careful analysis of Mrs. Livingston's character, and turn now to speak of her religious life. In doing this I shall introduce, in a casual way, as much of her personal history, and refer to as many of her distinguishing characteristics, as the proprieties of the occasion will allow.

Long before she felt that she was a child of God by faith in Christ, she had fixed habits of private devotion, and even while journeying, no degree of weariness, or peculiarities in her surroundings, could prevent her from reading

God's word before retiring to rest. She loved to trace the abiding influence of religion in her heart to the impressive bearing of a sister seen for the first time. It was that sister by whose side she will soon be placed to rest until the morning of the Resurrection. The simple dignity of holiness, united with meekness and tenderness, struck one whose mind was prepared to appreciate these heavenly qualities, and the impression, never effaced, resulted in an intercourse peculiarly blessed to her. What a touching comment upon the sacred words: "Ye are the light of the world!" Oh, for more of such luminous characters in the Church!

After her husband's death, while still in her meridian, she withdrew from the world, and during twenty-four years of widowhood her thoughts were turned, as they had not been before, to that better portion which the grace of God had enabled her to seek. For many years she endured an amount of physical suffering which it falls to the lot of but few to meet, yet so rich and abundant have been her spiritual consolations, that she often spoke of months of confinement and acute pain as the

happiest periods of her life. The world had given her the best it had to bestow. She knew the value of its pleasures, its honors, its wealth. They did not satisfy her, and she looked up for the only portion that can fill the void in an immortal soul. Her religious experiences and professions were influenced by marked peculiarities of mind and temperament. She entertained the strongest aversion for religious cant. The dealings of God's spirit with the human soul, she thought too sacred to be spoken of in conventional terms, or under circumstances which might deprive the subject of its solemnity. Her humility was unobtrusive and real. I have rarely met with one more inclined to self-depreciation. This tendency I think greatly marred her Christian comfort. It was not as easy for her as for some to cast the soul upon Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Perhaps her long retirement, and consequent habits of introspection, revealed to her more of the natural depravity of the human heart than those can discover who live more in things outward. Be this as it may, I am sure that sin was exceedingly sinful in her sight. But, to the praise of God

be it spoken, there were many seasons when she felt that Jesus was very near to her. The glories of the plan of Redemption seemed then to light up her whole mind, and she felt, with the warmest gratitude, its marvellous adaptation to the wants of every sinner. This glance at her religious life would be more than incomplete if I omitted to speak of her unusual faith in the special providence of God. If she could not at first easily trust Him as her Redeemer from sin, she did implicitly believe that the care extended to the birds of the air would never be withheld from those destined to an immortal life. Convinced that nothing can be trifling in the sight of Him with whom nothing is great, she looked up in every event of life for direction and comfort. Nothing was undertaken without a previous invocation of the Divine blessing, and the yearly departure from one home and arrival at the other was always sanctified by prayer. We cannot wonder at her faith in Providence if we consider the marvellous manner in which she had been led. Truly her ways were out of the beaten path. Few lives were more chequered than hers. Born in

St. Domingo, of wealthy and highly cultivated parents, nurtured in the lap of luxury and indulgence, and tossed by the storm of a fearful revolution on a strange land, there to contend with reverses which, admirably borne, soon gave way to a career as full of honors and dignities as the most ambitious could desire, she was disciplined to a trust in God's fatherly care. Her childhood was passed in that beautiful island where the sound of the language she afterward regarded as the one best adapted to man's intercourse with God had never struck her ear; where vital piety was a thing unknown; where all influences tended to rivet her desires to a world which promised unbounded delights to one never taught to look beyond it; where, rarely precocious in intellect, she was suffered to roam at will through large libraries filled with every thing poisonous as well as nutritious, and was saved from injury by high and generous instincts, and not by religious principle. Then followed her youth, during which the unclouded prospects of earlier years gave way to fearful scenes. There was pillage and bloodshed. There were flights by night illu-

mined by the glare of blazing homes; wanderings through tangled forests; long hours spent crouching amid rank vegetation, the only shelter from the violence of murderous pursuers; and then rescue at the hands of a faithful trembling slave, whose stealthy steps, as they crushed the dry branches, made the heart beat with fear and then with joy. These scenes of horror were followed by exile in a strange land, and by misfortunes which others, with spirits less buoyant, could scarcely have borne. Then came other scenes, where all her rare endowments and acquirements found a proper sphere for their display. All this, to human eye did not seem to lead here. The child who sported under the palm tree of a tropical clime, the young girl who fled from infuriated murderers, the woman as conspicuous for her personal charms as for her strong and brilliant intellect, who was set up in a high place where all could admire, was led at length to seek rest for her soul at the altar of the village church, where she has again been brought after a quarter of a century of a life as quiet and even as the former part of it was agitated and varied.

We will not wonder, then, that she trusted in the guiding love of God.

She became a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church many years since. She was not sectarian, for she loved the image of Christ wherever she found it, but she did have a decided attachment to the clear doctrines, and, above all, to the simple usages of the Church of her choice. She enjoyed the public ministrations of God's house, as those only can enjoy them to whom they are often denied. She has frequently declared that the happiest hours of her life have been spent in this sanctuary, where we are now gathered in sadness. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was a delight unto her. Some who hear me will remember the touching scene at this altar, a twelvemonth since, when she received, for the last time, the consecrated emblems of the broken body and shed blood of her Redeemer. Too feeble to approach herself, she was borne in the arms of a faithful attendant to the table of the Lord, and again borne from it. Her bodily weakness was, I doubt not, in keeping with her sense of spiritual unworthiness. It could hardly have

been anticipated then that so long a time would elapse before she would go to partake of the new wine in the kingdom above.

The bitter sorrow which her death has occasioned is mingled with pleasant thoughts of God's peculiar mercy to her in the close of her life. On Monday last she seemed unusually well. The night before had been a happy one, —so happy that she said to a loved one in the morning, "Oh! I have had such a sweet, sweet night, filled with the presence of God!" Before evening she was very ill, and was much of the time unconscious, until about five o'clock on Wednesday morning, when she fell asleep in Jesus, as a babe would fall asleep in the arms of its mother. She will never welcome us again to her mansion on earth. God grant us all grace so to live that we may receive her warm welcome in the mansion above!

"How blest the righteous when he dies!

When sinks a weary soul to rest!

How mildly beam the closing eyes!

How gently heaves the expiring breast!

- “ So fades a summer cloud away ;
 So sinks the gale when storms are o’er ;
 So gently shuts the eye of day ;
 So dies a wave along the shore.
- “ A holy quiet reigns around,—
 A calm which life nor death destroys ;
 And naught disturbs that peace profound
 Which his unfettered soul enjoys.
- “ Farewell, conflicting hopes and fears,
 Where lights and shades alternate dwell !
 How bright the unchanging morn appears !
 Farewell, inconstant world, farewell !
- “ Life’s labor done, as sinks the clay,
 Light from its load the spirit flies,
 While heaven and earth combine to say,—
 How blest the righteous when he dies !”

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